

1754

A
SERIOUS ADDRESS
TO
THE QUEEN,
PRINCE OF WALES,
AND
THE PUBLIC AT LARGE,
RELATIVE TO
HIS MAJESTY'S
UNHAPPY SITUATION.

BY
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SERIOUS ADDRESS



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DEATH, however circumstanced the party, and at whatever age it makes its appearance, is notwithstanding every alleviation from future hopes, the most awful ordeal human nature has to pass through. The tyrant at this period has felt, with redoubled anguish, every wound he has given to the innocent and the helpless: the sycophant has seen the absurdity of his homage, and has exclaimed with Wolsey, "Had I but served my
 " God with half the zeal I serv'd my king, he would
 " not in mine age have left me!" the atheist has ceased to deny that supremacy which it was the business of his life to ridicule, nay he has implored that assistance
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which before he had the ignorance to condemn : the debauchee has declaimed against the viciousness of his former companions, and sought to perfect his own repentance, by urging the reformation of the most depraved—The relentless have been the most forgiving, the cruel have been the most humane, and the proudest have evinced the most humility : here, however, there are satisfactory reasons for the changes of sentiment, of morals, and of manners. The conscience, which in the moment of business, of tyranny, of dissipation, and of voluptuousness, has been insensible to the perpetual warnings which daily surround us, or has been callous to the sufferings and wants of our fellow-creatures, from a momentary exemption from the sufferings of humanity, feels, when it is about to depart from this world, the bitterest reflections. But on the contrary, how much does the prospect brighten to our imagination, when we see the good and the provident man struggling in the hour of dissolution ! he is not sensible of a dastard fear, but ever impressed with the best and most benevolent sentiments, and ever influenced by the wisest and most rational conception of a Superior Being;
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and, though he is much engaged with respect to the change and place of his existence, yet, having the most perfect sense of omniscient humanity, he is happy in the prospect of an unrivalled and interminate reward. There are some, I know, zealous advocates for the belief of annihilation ; but this is the subtle comfort of the infamous and depraved. Others—atheists, say, why do you argue upon the existence of a Deity, when the good man has as great a desire for the continuance of his terrestrial abode, and when the termination approaches, is equally solicitous for a prolongation, as the most hardened sinner. However ready I may be to acknowledge the justness of the mere verbal assertion, the cause, beyond disputation, is very different. The solicitude of the one arises from the fear, the horror of a judgment, the justness of which he cannot distrust, the severity of which will never terminate ; and this is what I call a coward fear, produced by apprehensions the most alarming, from a series of infamous and infernal living. Now mark, how different a picture ! The virtuous have no forebodings relative to the mercy of God, but an awful love and gratification arising from

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a knowledge of his goodness and extensive power; and sensible of the infirmities of humanity, he doubts his own worthiness:— but trust me, he that has the most humble conception of his own actions, and yet those actions approach nearest of all others to the Godhead, actually grasps the kingdom of everlasting life: he feels for himself, yet feels more for society at large; he sees the depravity of his fellow probationers, but not like the Pharisee, exults upon his own excellence—he importunes for divine mercy on their sins, and at the time he endeavours to extenuate their faults, undesignedly makes his own perfections the more glaring. Among the truly virtuous sufferers, I consider an illustrious Personage, lately struggling with the pangs of an approaching dissolution; but however gratified I may be with the idea that his life is saved, * a still more mortifying consideration than death itself intrudes upon my mind. We have been blessed with a monarch, who by an unexampled pattern of domestic happiness and paternal re-

* It appears, since this was written, that it is impossible his Majesty can continue long an inhabitant of this world.

gard, has reared a large family, with the deepest sense of religion and morality, and given us the most exalted conception of his own worthiness. In another light, we have viewed him the ruler of a powerful and respectable people; he has with justice tempered real humanity, he has not been the slave of his own feelings; but where hardened infamy awaited its doom, little hope was to be expected. His Ministers, though not always fortunate, have always been influenced by the highest sense of the kingdom's importance, and have been men of undeniable abilities. Of the present people in power, we may truly discern an inextinguishable desire for the public welfare, which has been crowned, after but a short-liv'd power, with the most ample success; we could behold with pleasure plenitude in our coffers, and abundance in our resources; we could survey Europe with a pleasing eye and grateful heart, when tumult and disorder devastates the countries of our neighbours: and yet, though we are at present exempted from these hostile scenes, our tranquillity may be short; but our prospects of a glorious and successful contest were great. But alas! how uncertain, how futile are the hopes

hopes of this world ! at the moment we conceived every thing within our grasp, when our happiness we thought was nearly completed, when there was every prospect of a reduction of our national burthen, when we considered ourselves about to retrieve our lost credit and formidableness in the scale of empire, and all nearly accomplished by a Ministry the choice of the King and People, possessed of the confidence of both—our Monarch is dispossessed of his reason !—awful, tremendous, melancholy consideration !—the very idea of which a little time past would have “ freezed the blood, and “ harrowed up the soul !” then how much more are we to expect from the reality ! No comfort presents itself, no alleviation of our distress is at hand ! we have an unbeaten track before us, without a glimmering lamp or tottering guide to lead the way ! despondence, almost despair, naturally arises from our situation ; we are deprived in the first sense of the assistance of a King to unshackle the fetters, fast bound fetters of government, without a prospect of a successor ; in fact a perfect vacuum presents itself to our view : from his situation, business is stopped ; form cannot be conformed with,

with, reason cannot be complied with, justice cannot be administered, supplies cannot be procured, foreign correspondence cannot be preserved; no one attribute or indispensable duty of government can be enforced or accomplished.

I conceive from the character and conduct of the present Administration, from the indisputable, nay convincing proof of their desire to promote the happiness of the nation, by unwearied application and uncommon solicitude for the augmentation of our commerce and consequent resources, the people may, with the fullest assurance of their integrity, resign the adjustment of this lamentable catastrophe, to the wisdom of his Majesty's once counsellors.

Here a fond hope, I am fully persuaded, will enter the breasts of my fellow-countrymen, for it is the lot of human nature to conceive that most probable, which we most wish for, I mean the prospect of our Sovereign recovering the use of his faculties; but believe me 'tis a mere delusion, a fond, though, alas! an hopeless hope! Sir G. Baker does not give an atom of probability of this event ever coming to pass; the other physicians,

Dr. Warren, Reynholds, Heberden, &c. concur in the same opinion: how idle then are those hopes, how *futile* it is to give way to the most flattering prospects, without a foundation, or even shadow of their ever being realized.

A question here starts, of a very distressing complexion, In whose hands is the legal power to be lodged? Had the King died, in the Prince of Wales's, would have been the answer; but as that, unfortunately I may say, is not the case, and as there is little probability of its speedily happening, a Regency of some kind must be adopted. An act of parliament is in force, supplying the place of a minor heir, or of the King's absence, by an investiture of kingly power in three or four of the great officers of state: the Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury, President of the Council for the time being, &c. but a case similar to the present is without precedent; and as to the passing an act for the investiture of the office in another person or persons, supposing it passes through Lords and Commons, by the constitution of this country it cannot be valid without the royal assent; here then rests the difficulty.

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If procured, it is not legal, consequently not binding, from the inability of his Majesty to form any judgment of the propriety of the measure; or if he was able, no such measure would be necessary. Here then am I alarmed for the safety of the constitution, mischief most probably ensuing from whatever course is followed. We have no precedent for so great an encroach of power as must be necessary to establish any supreme authority, and to act without precedent may be a very dangerous stretch of the power of the Lords and Commons *in future*.

An instance has recently occurred abroad, relative to the inability of the king of Denmark, where his power has been vested in commissioners, and signed by himself, from a consciousness of his want of the intellects necessary to governing; here is a voluntary act of his own, when enabled to judge of the propriety of his conduct. The case of our Monarch is actual insanity, without a glimmer of reason to influence himself or his subjects with propriety: moreover the government of this country and that of Denmark varies materially, nor ought we, supposing them actually the same,

same, and the case the same, to consider it as a precedent for our conduct.

Laying aside, however, the illegality of the most cautious and wisest proceedings; supposing a bill or act passes both Houses, and suppose it is considered by the people as a law, from the esteem Administration is in, when in truth and in fact it is invalid, consequently no law, in whose person or persons is the Regency to be invested? If in the Prince of Wales, from his situation as first or the more honourable Regent, the Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland, from the relationship they bear to the crown, and the great officers of state before enumerated; it of course will deprive the Prince of that power, which from his age and situation he has every right to expect. If his father had died, he would have been immediately invested with the government, and in a situation which is similar to annihilation in that respect, where or what can be the objection? If they have no farther curb upon his conduct, when King, than that which is consistent with their duty and situation, why seek to shackle him when his situation is similar?

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The Prince is in the seven-and-twentieth year of his age, if he was not of age, other Regents conjoined with him, would be not only proper but necessary; upon what pretence or consideration they are esteemed necessary now, when they would not have been thought of, had his father died, appears to me inexplicable.

The Prince, I am ready to acknowledge, had once many follies, but now they are infinitely fewer, and very few vices. He has been influenced by that which few young men can withstand, who are born to affluence and to honours, the love of pleasure; how much more then is he to be excused, when the opportunities to gratify his passions have been so numerous, and when health has heated and added to their violence, when resources have been inexhaustible, and when situation has been unrivalled; instead then of our wondering at the ungovernableness of nature, surprize would be more consonant with reason, had he done otherwise.

Do not, I beseech you, consider me as the hired or splenetic panygerist, influenced by no other motive than gain, or comparative revenge; do not consider me as

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ready to wipe away every vice, or even fault, without first judging of the motive, and then of the action, and lastly of the consequence ; I conceive I am not so dastard a being, so unworthy of public confidence and regard. The Prince, for the first three or four years after he was his own master, led to his family and to his friends a distressing life of debauchery, the dupe of the most thoughtless, and the companion of the most abandoned; yet at the time he was most to be detested, benevolence and affability evinced to the public, that he was enslaved by the passions, that he was oftener duped than the duper, and that he was no man's enemy but his own. Time, at length, has taught him to abandon what he never admired, to seek pleasure, which before not want of taste deprived him of, but ignorance of their gratification excluded from. He was then flattered, courted by his companions, esteemed a demi-god; he has now seen the drift of their intentions, and with a becoming fortitude, quitted their company for ever.

It is well known that the Prince has evinced a strong partiality for the Opposition; I also revere their virtues,
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and admire their abilities, yet cannot help thinking that a change of administration, in consequence of the Prince being Regent, would be a most unfortunate and destructive measure to the country. It is true beyond disputation, that we have thrived uncommonly within these few years ; our commerce, our respectability, has increased wonderfully, in fact, from being an oppressed, sinking state, we are again rising to honour and to affluence ; how great then must be the evil, the necessary evil attending a change of Ministers ! In the first place, an enormous expenditure of the public money to assemble a parliament compatible with the measures of the men then in power, at least one million, notwithstanding the further charges upon innumerable petty appointments, regulations, &c. &c. inevitably following so great a revolution. Let the Prince only then consider the injurious consequences arising from the adoption of a plan, which, however consonant to his own inclinations, ought to be considered, and the alloy balanced against the advantages, if any, before it is adopted. Mr. Fox is well known through Europe, to be an able financier, a great orator, and of wonderful penetration ; he must, and is considered by every person,

son, one of the greatest men that ever existed; he has warmth and fire of imagination, conjoined with the most wonderful sagacity and penetration, and in his India Bill, though perhaps he attempted too great a stretch of ministerial power, he was striking at the very root of our evils in that quarter of the globe. In his coalition with Lord North, wherein I well know he has offended the common people of this country, he pursued the wisest, though perhaps not the most patriotic alternative. Another great man in the same party also occurs to my mind, I mean Mr. Sheridan; whose abilities, like a comet, have blazed upon the world, and illumined the hemisphere. His oratory, though not so immediately conclusive as Mr. Fox's, evinces a surprizing knowledge of the passions and the foibles of mankind. He has edified by example and experience; and though his conception is not so rapid or so sublime, his knowledge of the human heart is evidently greater: his wit and his satire are glaring and pointed, and what he is deficient in argument, or in the knowledge of his subject, he makes apparently ample amends for by the fire of his imagination. Considering Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan as the two principal men in Opposition; in
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my opinion, the former was born to govern and advise, the latter to support and to second his arguments. Mr. Burke's abilities are of a very different cast; he was never formed for a statesman; but in disclosing a most exuberant fancy in any other department of life, he would have stood on the pinnacle of perfection, without a competitor: as a poet, he would have demanded the applauses of the world; he would have viewed a discerning country gratified and edified by his labours, and without ever meddling in the vortices of public employment, have seen himself the rival of a Virgil, an Horace, or a Theocritus.

However high an idea I have of the two patriotic leaders of Opposition, Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, I do not conceive one single advantage would arise from a change of men and measures; nor do I think Mr. Pitt falls short in the least of Mr. Fox as a financier. If however he does, the Prince ought to consider the glaring disadvantages that will arise from a change of Ministers; he ought to recollect that the present have the confidence of the people, that they have an evident majority in the Commons, and that to turn them out of office at this critical moment, when all Europe nearly

is engaged in direful wars, may prove a source of the greatest ills this country ever experienced.

It is the duty as well as the interest of the Prince to court popularity, to consider that he is now but entering into public life ; for before this period he was as free from the corroding cares of government as any man breathing ; and before he attempts any innovations, or changes upon the present Administration, he ought to possess the thorough affection and popularity of the country, and he ought to be familiar with public life, and have seen the absurdities, inconsistencies, or errors of one set of men, before he adopts the measures of another ; and these it is impossible he should have discovered before he is acquainted with the labyrinths of public or official employment.

I have said so much respecting the Prince's future conduct, because I consider the adoption of a Regency the only resource of Administration. A very eminent barrister has given it as his decided opinion, that the Prince only can possess the appointment, considering the King as in reality dead to civil employment ; and as Parliament have not provided for such a circumstance, an arbitrary stretch of the power of the Lords and Commons assembled

affsembled in council must inevitably ensue, and the Prince be nominated Regent, possessing every regal honour, the crown excepted.

Considering the adoption of this measure the only popular resource of the Privy Council (for if the Regency was composed of several members, disputes, inimicities, &c. must inevitably ensue between the Prince and his coadjutors), it is earnestly recommended to the Prince, if he either regards popular applause, or success in his measures, to keep upon the best terms with the men now in power; to resign all the petty gratifications of revenge and private pique, and to consider himself as bound to the Public by the strongest ties, honour, affection, and interest, to promote the good and the prosperity of his country; and the most apparent mode of realizing his sollicitudes will be by an unalterable change in the present economical, yet vigorous measures.

To the Public in a body, I think a few words will not be unopportune or unnecessary. A very material change will most probably take place in the head of the constitution at this moment. We have seen a Monarch of the most exemplary virtue, of the most humane disposition

position, and possessed of the greatest regard for his subjects ; after an unfortunate war, we are once more rising to affluence and to power ; for these enviable blessings we must consider ourselves *ab origine* indebted to our Sovereign's wise alteration in his servants, and consequent measures. To pursue these advantages to perfection, we ought to rely with the most implicit faith on the actions of his successors, we ought to consider the Prince of Wales as the *primum mobile* of our support, we ought *in toto* to second, as far as in our power lies, the actions of himself and his servants ; by a ready and plentiful pecuniary supply, we should enable him, should a war be unavoidable, which I think must prove the case very speedily, to pursue it with vigour and consequent success : it is true, we are already very heavily laden, but a very small addition to the load may, under an Administration of ability, and under Commanders of resolution, be a prelude to a long and advantageous Peace.

T O T H E Q U E E N.

HOW melancholy, how hard an undertaking to afford consolation to the afflicted! it is a labour too often beyond the power of man to accomplish, it requires an heart of the purest composition; the soul that endeavours to cheer without sympathizing, only adds fuel to the flame, for without attempting to eradicate the disorder, mere superficial comfort rather irritates than composes. Your Majesty will too awfully feel what must too inevitably happen; and poor is the consolation that can be afforded, without a religious foundation. Situation, health of body, and fortune, are not alone sufficient to insure happiness, a still stronger, a still more forcible gratification is necessary, "Health of mind."—For an uninterrupted series of years, you have enjoyed the four requisites for happiness without alloy: it is too much for humanity to expect what is not human, it is too ample a portion of this world's

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bounty to last. You must now, with resolution and with patience, meet the awful decree of Providence ; and there are few, very few mortals who are exempted from worldly trial. It is not rank, it is not honour, it is not affluence, that will avert the omnipotent arm ; it is not revenge, it is not punishment; but it is trial of our worthiness for immortal happiness that governs his actions. Thus did the Patriarch Abraham secure manifold blessings to himself and to his posterity; and thus did our Saviour evince his own excellence, by dying for our sins. There are some men, who from nature are invulnerable to misfortune; this often proceeds from a callous and insensible constitution; and when procured by a reliance on God and on his mercies, is much easier to admire than to imitate. Though I consider your Majesty as one of the worthiest women that ever existed, though I have seen with delight and satisfaction, a numerous offspring, brought up by your and your Consort's precepts and examples, with the utmost regard to morality and religion: I do not esteem you so insensible, or so callous to human perfection, as to experience so great deprivation, without feeling all the horrors incident
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to your nature. But for however short a period probability may consider his existence, his dissolution is now rather to be desired than to be lamented; and when the awful period of separation arrives, it is even your Majesty's duty to meet it with fortitude! A progeny, not all arrived at years of discretion, demand it;—you will be left their only comforter, their only guide. Instruction in the great duties of brotherly love, morality, and religion, from so near, so unparalleled a relative, from a heart so immersed in good works, will touch with double poignancy, and succeed with redoubled effect. Though your loss will be the loss of the nation, yet public when placed in competition with private regard, may be considered in the same proportion as the light emitted from a fixed star, to that of the sun. Yet, notwithstanding this comparison, we shall feel sensibly and acutely; what a deluge of sorrow may we then justly and truly conclude will be your Majesty's lot! Then again consider comparatively your sorrows with those of your indigent subjects in the same situation, and mark to yourself how infinitely more blessed you are:—here is extended a fine field
for

for gratitude and philosophy!—here you may ponder upon other people's woes, and lighten your own by lightening theirs—here you may consider how infinitely more kind Providence has evinced himself toward you than to millions of your fellow-probationers; and here you will find a wonderful, inexhaustible source of comfort and happiness.

FINIS.

18-DE-67

